



***Transportation is an essential aspect of life. It is about the ability to readily and safely gain access to work, school, shopping, recreation, essential services and social gatherings. It is also an essential component of most economic activity and community infrastructure. This section of the plan should be used by City officials, residents, other government agencies, and developers to inform decisions that affect transportation in the City.***

## Vision Statement

*The City of La Crescent has a multi-faceted transportation system that enables the economic, environmental, and social functions of the community. Our street network will be safe and accessible for all users, regardless of age or ability, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and drivers. Infrastructure investments follow Complete Streets principles.*

## Issues & Opportunities

The planning process revealed the following issues and opportunities related to transportation and mobility that inform this plan for the future of La Crescent. These statements are drawn from public comments, the Community Indicator Report, committee discussions, agency interviews and survey results; they do not represent policy decisions. The list is meant as a summary of key points and not a list all issues or opportunities raised.

- Safety is a high-priority concern, for all types of transportation in and through the City: walking, biking, driving, public transit or rail.
- Specific areas of concern include crosswalks near school sites, Oak Street, 7th Street/Kistler Park; increased thru traffic, especially heavy truck traffic through town on CTH 6 and CTH 25 due to potential housing, industrial, and frac sand mining growth in Houston County; lack of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to existing housing off of CTH 6 and CTH 25; bike rider safety on STH 14/61 to La Crosse; access from N. 4th St and N. 2nd St. to the highway.
- Opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle improvements include completion of the Wagon Wheel Trail and bridge to Downtown; completion of connections to the Root River and Mississippi Scenic Trails; providing wider shoulders along highways and bridges during reconstruction projects to accommodate safer lane widths for bikers; continuing to secure right-of-way for future facility development; improving signage to improve safety by reducing driver and pedestrian/bicycle conflicts; filling gaps in the existing sidewalk and trail network.
- Most government agencies (City, County, State) lack sufficient funding to adequately maintain roadways let alone provide for expansion projects. A potential roadway expansion project is the extension of 7th Street to STH 16/S. Chestnut St. to alleviate thru traffic in town. Other desired improvements include providing scenic overlooks along the major highways and improving aesthetics along gateways into the City.
- Other transportation enhancement opportunities include weekend transit service to La Crosse; increasing transit-oriented developments; installation of real time GPS technology to enhance transit ridership; whistle-free train zones; and completing road diets to local streets to accommodate bike/ped users.
- According to the survey (question 11), 58% of respondents ranked Maintenance of Existing Roads the highest priority for transportation investments in the next 10 years, followed by Improvements to Off-Street Multi-Use Trails (22%), Improvements to Sidewalks (21%), Improvements to Bike Lanes (18%), Improvements to Public Transportation (10%) and New Roads or Connections within the City (10%).
- According to the survey (question 12), improving Crosswalks Near the Elementary School was the highest priority for bike and pedestrian safety improvements, followed by Improvements on Oak Street (sidewalk both sides and bike lane), Improvements to 7th Street (sidewalks), Biking and Pedestrian Lane on STH 6 and Wider Shoulder-Designated Bike Lane on STH 25.
- There are concerns regarding how new school site selection occurs and the cost to the community to retrofit or provide transportation facility enhancements that provide safe routes to school.

## Goals & Objectives



## Strategies



### Goal:

La Crescent provides a safe, efficient, multi-modal and well-maintained transportation network that balances the needs of all users.

### Objectives:

1. Traffic growth, and corresponding facility improvements, will be managed in balance with cost, pedestrian, bicycle and neighborhood impact considerations.
2. Biking and walking in La Crescent will be safe, enjoyable and efficient, especially in regards to providing Safe Route to Schools.
3. Create a well connected and safe regional trail system.
4. Alternatives to single occupancy vehicle trips will increase as a percentage of all transportation trips within the City and to/from the rest of the La Crosse-La crescent metro area.
5. Roadways will be designed, maintained and reconstructed to meet the needs of all users and to correspond to the needs and demands of surrounding land uses within a hierarchical system of functional classification.
6. Improvements to collector and arterial streets within La Crescent will continue to meet interstate and intrastate travel needs in balance with impacts to City neighborhoods.
7. Local transportation facilities and investments will be coordinated with regional facilities and investments.
8. Transportation corridors and gateways will be aesthetically attractive and enhance the image of the community.

### Strategies:

1. Gaps in the City's existing sidewalk and bicycle infrastructure will be systematically addressed through new facility construction. The City will implement the recommendations contained in the 2013 City of La Crescent Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (refer to the maps on the following pages). This plan should be amended as needed due to changes in land uses since the plan was adopted (e.g. Kistler Park/Aquatic Center crosswalk improvements at 7th Street)
2. The City will review the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan when updating the City's Capital Improvement Plan and during annual City budgeting discussions to incorporate pedestrian and bicycle improvement projects as may be reasonably addressed given budget constraints.

Low hanging fruit such as enhanced cross walk markings, bike/ped signage, and other improvements which do not require facility reconstruction should be prioritized first. Short-term strategies include:

- Painted crosswalks near school sites and Kistler Park. This may also include the use of other cost efficient safety improvements such as off-street pedestrian crossing signs; on-street portable/moveable crosswalk signs and stands; and installation of crosswalk flags.
- Installation of painted bike lanes and bicycle signage along CTH 6 and CTH 25 to connect existing and planned developments (e.g. Racetrack area) to existing City bike/ped infrastructure along 7th and Elm Streets.
- Lowering speed limits on highways entering the City as warranted.

Long-term strategies include:

- Installation of Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons (RRFB) at high traffic/high profile pedestrian and bicycle crossings
- Intersection/street reconstruction to provide off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities/enhancements. For example, realligning the intersection of CTH 6 and CTH 25.
- Identification of Highway 1 or Apple Blossom Trail as a premier bike route with enhanced safety and signage.



## La Crescent Strategic Bicycle Planning Existing and Proposed Biking Facilities

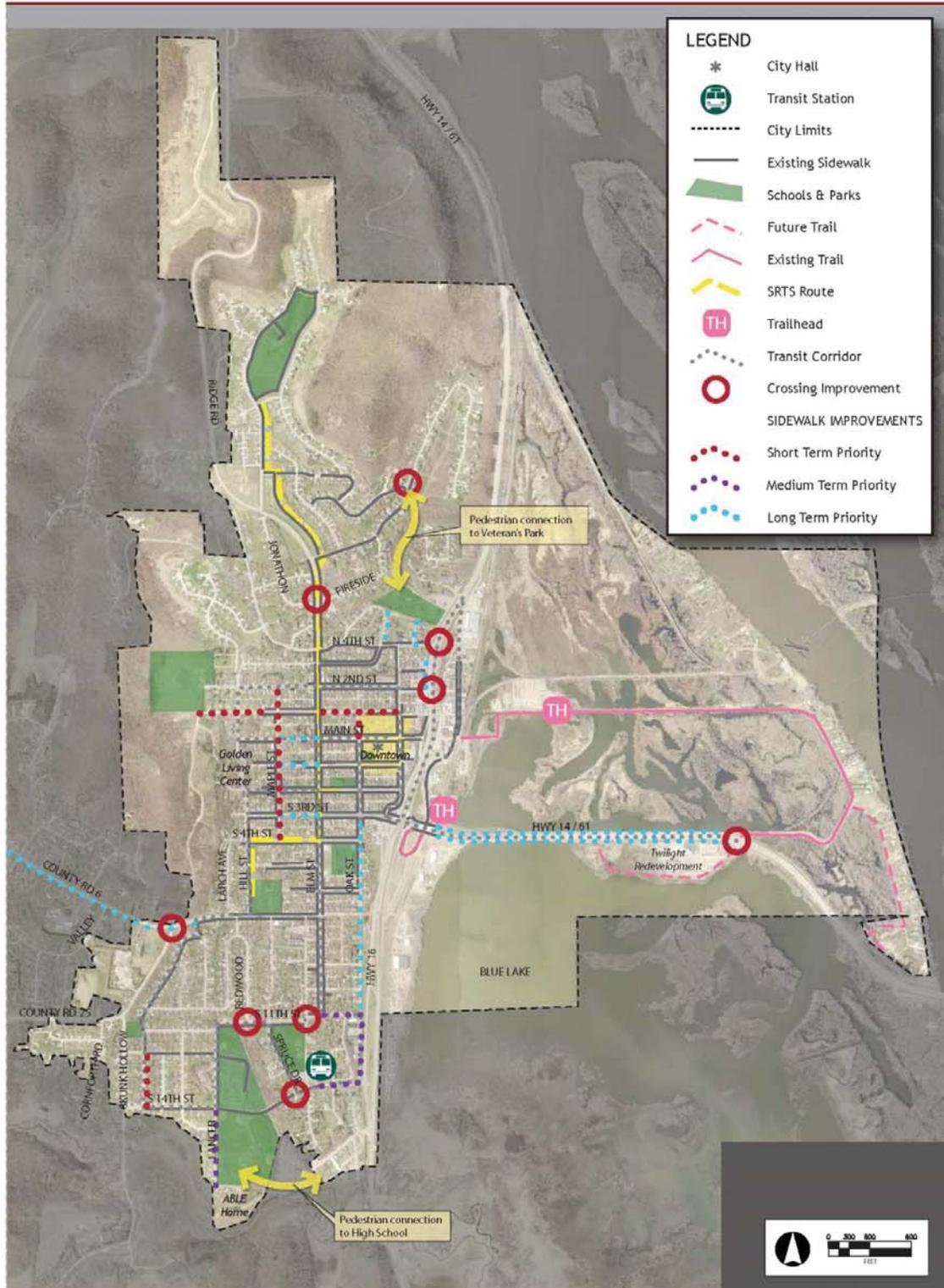
January 2013





## La Crescent Pedestrian Plan Recommended Improvements

January 2013





3. The City will complete a grade separated pedestrian and bicycle access across STH 16/61 to improve access to the Mississippi River and Blue Lake Marsh from the downtown area.
4. The City will follow Complete Street principals. This means that every transportation project will make the street network better and safer for drivers, transit users, pedestrians, and bicyclists, including those County or State roadways which pass through La Crescent.
5. The City encourages the development of neighborhoods that are oriented towards pedestrians and well-served by sidewalks, bicycle routes, and other non-motorized transportation facilities. Bicycle and pedestrian ways shall be designed to connect to adjacent developments, schools, parks, shopping areas, and existing or planned pedestrian or bicycle facilities.
6. The City will continue to work with regional and state organizations to create a well connected regional trail system, including connections to the Root River Trail and Mississippi River Scenic Trail. These connections may start as on-road facilities with the goal of eventually achieving off-road facilities through incremental and systematic land acquisition and trail development. Priority improvements include connecting La Crescent to Millers Corner and then on to Hokah.
7. Coordinate with local snowmobile associations and area landowners to consider possible utilization of snowmobile trails and trail corridors for hiking or biking opportunities.
8. The City will continue to promote the growth of the La Crosse Municipal Transit (MTU) system ridership in La Crescent. In collaboration with local and regional organizations, the City will host events that encourage and celebrate alternative transportation.
9. The City will maintain a five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to plan for the annual construction and maintenance of roads and other transportation facilities. Maintenance and safety improvement to existing roads should be prioritized over capital expenditures for new road construction. Annual transportation investments should also include funding for both traditional road improvements and alternative transportation modes such as bike trails, sidewalks, crosswalks, bike/ped signage, and transit facilities. Consider updating the CIP every year to create a rolling five-year plan.
10. New roads shall be built according to City standards and inspected before accepted for dedication. The City maintains requirements for new roads and driveways that aim to ensure safety for all users.
11. Roadway design will account for snow removal needs, including adequate terrace width between the street and the sidewalk. Roadway width should be designed based on the functional classification of the roadway and alternative transportation needs. The use of wide local streets in single-family residential neighborhoods should be avoided. Where existing roadway widths are deemed excessive the City may consider the use of a road diet during future reconstruction projects to accommodate facility improvements for bicyclists, pedestrians and transit users. A road diet is a technique whereby the number of travel lanes, roadway width, or number of parking lanes is reduced in order to achieve systemic improvements often for pedestrian, bicycle, and transit users. Road diets can also be used to provide shared turn lanes and increased greenspace to reduce areas of imperious pavement. Areas to prioritize for future road diets include:
  - 3rd Street from Walnut Street to Elm Street.
  - Residential neighborhoods that do not have existing sidewalk facilities and existing natural (e.g. mature trees) or man-made objects (e.g. shallow building setbacks) make installing a sidewalk outside of the existing curb area impractical.

## Strategies



12. When considering new development proposals the City may require development agreements that define the responsibilities of the City and the developer regarding any required improvements to City streets and funding of such improvements. The City may also require that the property owner, or their agent, fund the preparation of a traffic impact analysis by an independent professional prior to approving new development to better understand potential impacts from new development and potential mitigation efforts.
13. The City encourages other adjacent local governments to consider requiring independent traffic impact analysis before approving potential developments that would significantly increase traffic on roadways through La Crescent to better understand potential impacts from new development and potential mitigation efforts.
14. When considering new development proposals the City will consider potential impacts to roadway traffic counts, accelerated maintenance needs/costs, public safety, and neighborhood impacts. The City should investigate opportunities to require developers to provide additional funds for long-term maintenance needs as part of the approval of new development or annexation proposals.
15. Where appropriate, the City may designate speed limits, weight restrictions, truck routes, or access restrictions to protect local streets and improve traffic flow and public safety for all users.
16. The City will work with La Crescent - Hokah School District to promote Safe Routes to School via education, evaluation and engineering, enforcement and encouragement (i.e. the "Five E's"). Low-hangin strategies include:
  - Painting/marketing crosswalks,
  - Adding pedestrian crossing signs near intersections,
  - Adding more volunteer crossing guards,
  - Establishing a higher police presence before and after school.
17. The City will work with representatives from the Department of Transportation, La Crosse Area Planning Committee, railroad companies, and surrounding Counties to raise awareness of local concerns when State and County highways or railroads in the area are slated for improvement. The City will inform the community about regional and state transportation projects and will encourage public involvement in regional transportation facility improvement planning. Enhancing safety of existing rail road facilities is an area of special concern.
18. The City will work with State and County agencies to provide scenic overlooks along their roadways to enhance regional tourism and recreation.
19. The City will work with State and County agencies to explore the possibility of extending 7th Street to STH 16/S. Chestnut Street to alleviate thru traffic in town and to complete a cost-benefit analysis of this potential facility, including impacts to adjacent property owners and the natural environment.
20. The City will work with State and County agencies to maintain aesthetically pleasing transportation corridors and gateways which reflect the community's charm and vision. This may include enhanced landscaping, artistic enhancements, clean-up of trash and debris, decorative lighting, improved community signage and removal of billboards. Areas to prioritize include:
  - Along the Pike from the Twilite area west into the City.